(a) whether our armed forces have been put on alert to provide protection, security and escort to Indian assets in the Arabian Sea and evacuate Indian Nationals in the event of a war;

(b) whether India has offered its services on formation of a peace keeping force based in Lebanon; and

(c) whether India has made any independent assessment of the likely duration of the war and its fall out in the SE Asian region?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The Government had drawn up a contingency plan for evacuation of Indians in Kuwait through Saudi Arabia, if necessary. However, there was no need to evacuate any Indians.

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

Production of Light Combat Aircraft and its Components

4205. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether successful testing of prototypes of indigenously built Light Combat Aircraft has reached production state;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Praga Tools Ltd. at Secunderabad, A.P. is having technicians and suitable technical equipments to manufacture any component parts pertaining to Light Combat Aircraft;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if so, the reasons for the Defence Ministry in not making use of Praga Tools Ltd. for the production of component parts of Light Combat Aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme is in development stage and flight testing on two technology demonstrators of LCA is under progress. Sanction has been accorded for building 5 prototypes of LCA for accelerating flight testing to reach the production stage.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. M/s Praga Tools Ltd., have technical infrastructure to undertake aircraft related machining work. They have been entrusted with machining work related to aircraft structural parts, tooling and Line Replaceable Units of LCA during Full Scale Engineering Development Phase.

(f) M/s Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) is identified as the designated production agency for LCA. Production requirement would be sub-contracted by them to the identified vendors.

Demands/mention points raised regarding AFHQ employees

4206. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of demands/mention points concerning AFHQ employees were discussed/raised in the meeting of the Departmental Council (JCM) of DOP&T held on 17.7.2002;

(b) if so, the details of such demands/mention points/decisions;

(c) whether any follow up action on the above mentioned mention points/ decisions has been taken;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the progress made on each point; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and steps proposed to be taken for implementation of the decisions taken/points raised with the likely time involved?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir, no meeting took place on 17.7.2002 however the meeting was held on 12.7.2002.

(b) Details of demands/mention points are as given at Statement *(See* below).

(c) All the points have been/are being progressed and some points have already been decided.

(d) Details of action taken/progress report in respect of these items are as given in the Statement referred to answer of part (b) above.

(e) Does not arise.